

Remarks by Daniel S. Goldin
NASA Administrator
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NASA Headquarters Auditorium, Washington, DC

Thank you everyone for coming here today. I have two subjects--a simple subject and a more difficult subject--actually both difficult subjects.

Based upon what is going on today up on the capital, I decided that tomorrow I am going to schedule a session to talk about anthrax and what steps we have to take to understand it and what we might do to deal with it. I would appreciate it if everyone who is here in the audience and those who are at the centers would take a look and notice...I don't know what time it is, 1:00 p.m. tomorrow. It will take about an hour and I think it is important that we be aware of it. But as the President says, life has to go on we cannot give in to the scare tactics of these terrible people that are trying to disrupt life in America. So we are going to do what is necessary to take precautions and to be safe.

After that, a policeman is flying up from New York City tomorrow with a flag that they recovered from the World Trade Center and that we are going to fly on the Shuttle along with the shields of a number of firemen and policemen. Mayor Giuliani has been just wonderful and is ecstatic about the support that NASA is giving. So for those who are interested, I invite you to be either on the television or be here in the audience. The New York City police and firemen and emergency workers have done an unbelievable job and when I had the privilege of meeting Mayor Giuliani in New York and touring Ground Zero I got a chance to talk to these incredible people. Maybe he will have a chance to talk to us. I don't know, but NASA is going to do its part.

That was difficult, now the more difficult part.

This morning I sent a letter of resignation to the President of the United States. I told him how honored I was to serve under him. I told him the happiest moment of my life was when I was sworn in by his father as NASA Administrator and how honored I was to serve eight years under Bill Clinton. As the arithmetic turns out, I served nine months and 20 days under George H.W. Bush, eight years under President Clinton, and I think it will be nine months and 27 days under George W. Bush.

I can't begin to tell you that growing up in the South Bronx I never thought I'd see this moment, this experience that I had. I had a lease on the program. I am handing the lease back on November 17, 2001. There will be good people that will come behind.

I am going to work with the President's people and the President to identify an Acting Administrator until a permanent Administrator is sworn in. It is a very amicable arrangement.

I have nothing but praise for the way the President is handling the country in this time of crisis and we at NASA are working with him.

I just think that you are the greatest...everybody in this audience here, some folks who worked with me at the White House in prior administrations, some folks who worked at NASA before, and all the NASA employees. In my lifetime, 39 years as an executive in the space business, I cannot tell you how outstanding you are. I have worked with corporations around the world, around the country, and I have had a chance to meet hundreds and thousands of people, and this team is unbelievable. Wherever I go I get nothing but compliments. The job is easy due to the way you perform. Your loyalty to the presidency, to the American people, and to the Administrator, I greatly appreciate.

The thing that I think you do best and ask you to do best is protecting human life. I've been the Administrator, I think, for 57 shuttle launches, more than half of the whole series of launches and we have never had any serious injury. The Shuttle has gotten better and better. I asked Jeff Sutton to do a calculation for me. How many take-offs and landings have the NASA planes had while I am the Administrator? 248,500. Think about it, not a serious injury or a death, considering we have SR 71s, ER 2s, we fly over the North Pole, the South Pole and the jungles of Brazil. We have T-38s at unbelievable operational levels, we have 747s we have B-57s and on and on. Human life is more precious than any research we could do.

You do a terrific job with inanimate objects. In my tenure we launched 171 things--171 missions to space--and we have only lost 11. No other organization in the world has a record like that and you did it. The total loss in dollars is about a half billion dollars and we launched \$23 billion into space. I think about the ruckus when we lost a little spacecraft on Mars. A cute, little, itty-bitty spacecraft.

I remember being out with the terrific people at the Jet Propulsion Lab who really tried to follow my direction. I asked them after they cut the price by a factor of three to cut it by another factor of two. They were crazy enough to try and they tried and failed and that's ok. It's really ok. I made a promise when I came here, I take personal responsibility for the failures and everyone else can get accolades for the successes. That is the job of the Administrator.

The fact of the matter is that on Tuesday night we are going to orbit Mars and most probably it will be successful. In fact, they just did some vernier corrections and I don't think they will have to do another propulsion burn because they are so on target.

So you have done a spectacular job--and it is not as though you did easy things. Look at the kind of missions that were done. The space station went together flawlessly.

All this brings me back to the day I met with President Bush in March (1991), when I interviewed for the job. I told him that this was just so important and I turned over our life and had my wife come to Washington...give up her research in Los Angeles...give up her job--she was a docent in the museum. And we walked away from our children. And ten years later... it's time.

One has to make choices. I love this Agency. I wish I could be here for decades but it brings me back to a decision I had to make in the 60s when I was working about 60 hours a week, taking

six and eight graduate credits a night and had two young children and a wife. At that point in time I had to decide, do I get a doctorate or do I have a family and I choose that.

Once again at this point in life it's time and I have to pay attention to my family--my wife deserves my attention. Last night I spoke to my grandson Zachary and I told him Grandpa is going to be available to make rockets and planes with you. His yelps of joy told me Judy had me make the right decision.

Speaking of Judy, I asked my good friend Ed Heffernan to pick up Judy. I thought this would be an emotional day. He said, "Judy, emotional? She's going to be the one doing hand flips when you announce you're leaving."

Just another fond memory, I come from first-generation Americans and my father graduated college during the Depression with a degree in biology. He didn't have work for about five or ten years, and finally he got a job in the post office sorting mail. All my grandparents are from other countries in Eastern Europe. There he was, April 1, 1991, in the Oval Office of the White House with his son getting sworn in.

He kept touching the President and I said to myself, "Dad, get your hands off the President." It was so embarrassing. Here is President Bush standing there and my father is touching him. He had to know it was real, and the amazing thing is that President Bush understood. He understood what was happening. It is a statement of how great this country is. That if you work hard and have a lot of luck, good things will happen. So anytime you get frustrated with the system, just think about the alternatives. Every time the members of Congress are asking for another piece of data, every time there are accusations made and problems up on the Hill, think about the alternatives.

This morning I called Mr. Sensenbrenner, our science chairman for many years, and I told him, "Mr. Sensenbrenner, you made us a better agency because you cared." It got a little volatile at times but he really did care and this is part of the democratic process.

So as my successor comes in, just remember that a democracy is better than the alternative and it's really worth it and the openness is worth it. NASA is one of the most open agencies because everyone is a rocket scientist in America and everyone loves what we do.

That is why we get more attention. It is not that they are against us, they love us more. I have told countless members of Congress the NASA team, the people at NASA, are stronger than almost everyone else in government because of the scrutiny they get. You ought to give them more scrutiny not less. Well, maybe.

Just think about that. Think about what is going on in the world. The root cause of some of the problems is that people can't have this discussion in the countries that are the sources of terrorism. If these kinds of things would happen in those countries, I don't think we would have the frustration that we are seeing being imposed on America.

So, let me just thank the Space Science Enterprise. (Everyone will get recognized; don't feel too good, Ed.) Their only challenge is to understand the origin, evolution and destiny of our universe. A small, little task. To understand how life formed and is ubiquitous to the universe. To understand the basic essence of life...and it is magnificent. What they have done with spacecraft at Mars, Jupiter and soon to be Saturn, and telescopes of all ranges...it is just magnificent, it is inspirational, it changes things. Life is about more than consumption and survival...and having this intellectual stimulation is as important as anything this nation does.

In the Earth Science Enterprise, it is spectacular. They have tripled the number of spacecraft on orbit. I remember just before I came to NASA I was reading the papers about how the weather satellites were almost out. We had one geostationary weather satellite, and we were going to try and borrow one from Europe. In the fall they were worried about being able to detect hurricanes and the Earth Science team quietly and efficiently fixed it and today we have two operating geostationary satellites and we have two full stand-by satellites. We have a whole group of other satellites that measure different things. We have 11 that we are going to launch in about the next year. With that, we are going to understand the forcings of climate on our environment and weather on Earth. Hopefully we will have weather models that will not be three days but eight to twelve days. Think about the impact on lives and humanity and then climate predictions.

The Office of Biological and Physical Research is an emerging office that's going to reap the harvest from the space station. While the emphasis had been on building it, we are now going to actually use it. We are going to have Nobel laureates working with new forms of matter called Bose-Einstein condensates and we are going to have the most advanced clocks in the world that will allow us to do better navigation and allow us to do better physical work on the ground. We are going to be able to better understand biology and genetic expression. Again, the essences of life...and marry it up with the astrobiology from Space Science. This is what we are about.

Then we have the office of Aerospace Technology. As soon as the event happened on the 11th of September, the people in the office of Aerospace Technology were working with the Transportation Department to figure out how to make planes more secure, how to make them higher, faster, safer. How do we make rockets that are safer? In a few decades we are going to have rockets that are six Sigma rockets that are going to be reliable to one part in a million. It is going to change everything.

Finally, the Human Development of Space Enterprise. They have done nothing more than a miracle. That space station went together like a jigsaw puzzle. Every piece fit and it went together flawlessly. I was speaking to the press today and someone said the budget was out of control. I said I make no apologies. None. The people have done it for the lowest possible price and they were honest enough to identify a problem before it occurred. We are going to solve that problem working with the Young panel. That space station is going to be spectacular. The Russians just put another airlock on the space station. I don't know if there is any other group in the world that can do what they have been doing. I salute them.

Then we have the work done in Small and Disadvantaged Businesses. We have tripled the amount of business that NASA does with small disadvantaged business while at the same time increasing small business. We have met every goal.

In education and diversity, NASA is everywhere and they do the right things.

As I go through the centers...

- NASA Goddard--spectacular work on Hubble and Next Generation Space Telescope, Earth Science and space physics
- At Marshall, a center in transformation that's going to do the things in rockets that I just talked about and supplying a lot of science to the station and propulsion to the shuttle
- At NASA Johnson, an unbelievable engineering team that has overseen the safe operations of the shuttle and Kennedy that executed it
- Stennis, where the propulsion testing is done
- Mother Langley, which gives us the aeronautics work and a lot of the ideas that fuel the agency
- NASA Ames, where they are transforming work focused on wind tunnels to work focused on nano-, bio-, and information technology that's going to change everything in every aspect of NASA and every aspect we see in America
- At Glenn, they're doing spectacular work in aero-propulsion and microgravity research and supplying technologies like ion engines for Deep Space One. When I was at NASA in the 60s we talked about flying electric propulsion and I am proud that we finally put primary propulsion in space that is electric propulsion in Deep Space One. NASA Glenn made a huge difference and it's going to change everything for Deep Space missions going to the outer planets.
- Dryden, where they fly higher. They got to 96,500 feet, almost made it to 100,000. Kevin, you will do it next year. They go faster, they go safer.
- JPL, just spectacular performance to the planets and now with the interferometry with terrestrial planer finder. If life exists within a hundred light-years of Earth, we are going to find it when we launch that terrestrial planer finder.

I have gone on and on. What I am trying to say many different ways is you are the greatest. It was easy being Administrator. It's going to be very hard walking out that door but America is full of really good people. Whoever succeeds me will be great. I intend to be quiet because the new Administrator needs to have the public spotlight to do what he or she thinks is right but I will always have NASA in my heart and I will always think of each and every one of you. Thank you very much for a good ten years.

I couldn't have gotten a better prize with millions of dollars, thank you.

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